

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



Information Technology Resource Management

WEB SITE POLICY

Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)

ITRM PUBLICATION VERSION CONTROL

ITRM Publication Version Control: It is the user's responsibility to ensure they have the latest version of this ITRM publication. Questions should be directed to the Associate Director for Policy, Practice and Architecture (PPA) at VITA's Strategic Management Services (SMS). SMS will issue a Change Notice Alert, post it on the VITA Web site, and provide an email announcement to the Agency Information Technology Resources (AITRs) at all state agencies and institutions as well as other parties considered by PPA to be interested in the change.

This chart contains a history of revisions to this ITRM publication's revisions.

Version	Date	Purpose of Revision
Original	12/08/2005	Base Document
Revision 1		

PREFACE

Publication Designation

ITRM Policy GOV105-00

Subject

Web Site Policy

Effective Date

December 8, 2005

Compliance Date

December 8, 2005

Supersedes

None.

Scheduled VITA Review

One (1) year from the effective date, then every two years thereafter.

Value Statement

Implementing this Policy has several advantages for the Agency that will also benefit the Web site visitor. The Agency will benefit from reduced maintenance cost by avoiding dependence on a unique provider and proprietary formats, while gaining the advantage of the backward- and even forward-compatibility, while search engine time will be reduced and creating new content will be easier and more economical. Additionally, an accessible a Web site broadens an Agency's potential audience and makes the Web site much more usable for everyone.

Authority

Code of Virginia, §§ 2.2-2005 – 2.2-2032.

(Creation of the Virginia Information Technologies Agency; "VITA"; Appointment of Chief Information Officer (CIO))

Code of Virginia, §2.2-2457; §2.2-2458

(Powers and Duties of the Information Technology Investment Board; the "Board")

Code of Virginia §2.2-3803

(Administration of systems including personal information; Internet privacy policy)

Code of Virginia, § 2.2-2012

(Procurement of Information Technology and Telecommunications Goods and Services; Computer

Equipment to be based on Performance-based Specifications)

Code of Virginia, § 2.2-3500 et seq.

(Information Technology Access Act: Assurance of Non-visual Access for the Blind and Visually Impaired)

Code of Virginia, § 51.5-1 et seq.

(Virginians with Disabilities Act)

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Scope

This Policy is applicable to all Executive Branch state agencies (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Agency") that are responsible for supporting a publicly accessible "Web site" with the Commonwealth. Agencies that are exempt from implementing the Web Site Standard Section 3.1 Template Requirements are: The Virginia Tourism Corporation, The Library of Virginia, museums, and institutions of higher education.. However, they must still implement the Web Site Standard Section 3.2 Portal Requirements and the Accessibility Standard (GOV103-00). This Policy is offered only as guidance to local government entities.

Purpose

To encourage greater efficiencies and effectiveness in the use of technology to accomplish government business. This Policy provides a common look and feel to all Agencies' Web sites. By creating a new accessibility template and requirements, this Policy helps to make the user's experience as pleasant and trouble-free as possible.

Objectives

To ensure clear statement of high-level, government-wide directives concerning Web sites.

To ensure coordination of Web site related policies across branches of government.

To assist agencies in the development, maintenance, and administration of Web site services.

General Responsibilities

In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, the following provisions apply with respect to Commonwealth Information Technology Resource Management (ITRM):

The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)

VITA is responsible for the development and adoption of policies, standards, and guidelines for the:

- management of information technology by state agencies and institutions; and
- procurement of information technology and telecommunications goods and services of every description for state agencies.

The Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth (CIO)

The CIO's responsibilities include directing the formulation and promulgation of policies, guidelines, standards, and specifications for the purchase, development, and maintenance of information technology.

The Information Technology Investment Board (the Board)

The Board approves policies, standards, and guidelines recommended by the Chief Information Officer for the use of information technology by state agencies in the Executive Branch of state government.

All State Agencies

Agencies are required to:

- cooperate with the Secretary of Technology, the CIO, and the Virginia Information Technologies Agency in the performance of their powers and duties.; and
- comply with the Virginia Information Technologies Agency's policies, standards, and guidelines for information technology resources in the Commonwealth.

Related ITRM Policies, Standards, and Guidelines

ITRM Standard GOV106-00: Web Site Standard

ITRM Guideline GOV107-00: Web Site Guideline

ITRM Standard GOV103-00: Virginia Information Technology Accessibility Standard

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1. BACKGROUND

The Web Site Policy (ITRM Policy GOV105-00) brings together relevant policies established by the Governor, the Secretary of Technology, and the Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth that affect Web site service provision by Agencies. The requirements in this document have been approved by the Information Technology Investment Board.

1. STATEMENT OF ITRM POLICY

This Policy requires all Agency public Web sites to have a common look and feel. To assist Agencies this effort, a design guide has been developed that is Section 508¹ and WAI Level A compliant or better in accessibility. The design guide and details related to it may be viewed on the Web Accessibility and Training Guide (WATG) at: www.vadsa.org/watg. Each Agency is responsible for ensuring that its Web site(s) remain compliant with this Policy.

2.1 Policy Requirements

2.1.1 *Accessibility Requirements*

Agency Web sites shall comply with the accessibility requirements contained in the Virginia Information Technology Accessibility Standard (ITRM GOV103-00).

2.1.2 *Template Requirements*

The Web Accessibility and Training Guide (WATG) was developed to assist users in orienting themselves to the “one government” approach to Commonwealth services. WATG provides guidance on achieving Section 508 and WCAG Level A accessibility. Applicable provisions are built into the template, but each Agency will be responsible for ensuring that any new content added to the site remains compliant with the Web Site Standard and the Accessibility Standard. All approved requirements, including Section 508 and WCAG Level A accessibility, are built into the template, but each Agency will be responsible for ensuring that any new content added to the site remains compliant with this document. (For further details see: <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>)

¹ The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 508 standards of 36 CFR Part 1194), as amended.

2.1.3 Portal Requirements

The Commonwealth of Virginia provides a portal for all state services at virginia.gov². The portal provides a central point of access for all users³ to locate Virginia related information and services.

² The virginia.gov portal hosted by Virginia Interactive provides citizens and business a single, electronic gateway to all government-related information.

³ In the case of government Web sites, a "user" is any customer of that site, targeted or untargeted. It is possible for a customer base to have several sub-groups of users, in which case it is acceptable to target specific user groups.

2. GLOSSARY

Banner Image: For the purposes of the Commonwealth of Virginia Web template, a "banner image" is the graphic used between the top navigation bar and the main content (on the home page template) or the top navigation bar and the lower breadcrumb bar (on the sub-page template). The image is 50 pixels high and should gracefully handle resolutions at least as wide as 1024 pixels.

Bread Crumbs: Bread crumb navigation shows the users where they are and how the information is structured. Because users see the way the hierarchy is structured they can learn it more easily. By making each label a link, the users can quickly browse up the hierarchy. Bread Crumbs take up minimal space on the page and leave most of the space for the real content.

Downloadable Documents: Downloadable documents (e.g. Adobe PDF, a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, a Microsoft Word document or equivalent) are defined as stand-alone documents that open an embedded process. These documents will require a plug-in link be provided on the Web policy page and the page from which the document is accessed. (See also the WATG for information on making downloadable documents accessible.)

Equivalent: Content is "equivalent" to other content when both fulfill essentially the same function or purpose upon presentation to the user. In the context of this document, the equivalent must fulfill essentially the same function for the person with a disability (in as feasible a manner as possible, given the nature of the disability and the state of technology) as the primary content does for the person without any disability. For example, the text "The Full Moon" might convey the same information as an image of a full moon when presented to users. Note that equivalent information focuses on fulfilling the same function. If the image is part of a link and understanding the image is crucial to choosing the link target, an equivalent must also give users an idea of the link target.

Frames: In creating a Web site, frames is the use of multiple, independently controllable sections on a Web presentation. This effect is achieved by building each section as a separate [HTML](#) file and having one "master" HTML file identify all of the sections. When a user requests a Web page that uses frames, the address requested is actually that of the "master" file that defines the frames. The result of the request is that multiple HTML files are returned, one for each visual section. Links in one frame can request another file that will appear in another (or the same) frame. A typical use of frames is to have one frame containing a selection menu and another frame containing the space where the selected (linked to) files will appear.

Heading Elements: The six heading elements, *H1* through *H6*, denote section headings. Although the order and occurrence of headings is not constrained by the HTML [DTD](#), documents [should](#) not skip levels (for example, from *H1* to *H3*), as converting such documents to other representations is often problematic.

Example of use:

```
<H1>This is a heading</H1>
Here is some text
```

```
<H2>Second level heading</H2>
Here is some more text.
```

Typical renderings are:

H 1 Bold, very-large font, centered. One or two blank lines above and below.

H 2 Bold, large font, flush-left. One or two blank lines above and below.

H 3 Italic, large font, slightly indented from the left margin. One or two blank lines above and below.

H 4 Bold, normal font, indented more than *H3*. One blank line above and below.

H 5 Italic, normal font, indented as *H4*. One blank line above.

H 6 Bold, indented same as normal text, more than *H5*. One blank line above.

(For further information see the [XHTML Quick](#)

[Reference Guide:](#)

<http://www.mit.edu/~ddcc/xhtmllref/heading.html>)

Home Page: For a Web user, the home page is the first Web page that is displayed after starting a Web browser like Netscape's Navigator or Microsoft's Internet Explorer. The browser is usually preset so that the home page is the first page of the browser manufacturer. However, you can set the home page to open to any Web site. For example, you can specify that "http://www.yahoo.com" be your home page. You can also specify that there be no home page (a blank space will be displayed) in which case you choose the first page from your bookmark list or enter a Web address.

For a Web site developer, a home page is the first page presented when a user selects a site or presence on the World Wide Web. The usual address for a Web site is the home page address, although you can enter the address (Uniform Resource Locator) of any page and have that page sent to you.

Server: In general, a server is a computer [program](#) that provides services to other computer programs in the same or other computers. The computer that a server program runs in is also frequently referred to as a server (though it may contain a number of server and [client](#) programs). In the [client/server](#) programming model, a server is a program that awaits and fulfills requests from [client](#) programs in the same or other computers. A given application in a computer may function as a *client* with requests for services from other programs and also as a *server* of requests from other programs. Specific to the Web, a [Web server](#) is the computer program (housed in a computer) that serves requested [HTML](#) pages or files. A Web *client* is the requesting program associated with the user. The Web [browser](#) in your computer is a client that requests HTML files from Web servers

Validator: A service or system that verifies that a page meets Web site standards. (See: WATG)

WAI Level A: The Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) is part of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the organization that maintains Web standards and best practices. WAI is responsible for the guidelines used internationally to make the Web accessible. Their current rating system is broken down into Level A, Level AA, and the most stringent level, Level AAA. More information can be obtained from their Web site at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/>.

WCAG: The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0 is part of a series of accessibility guidelines published by the [Web Accessibility Initiative](#). The series also includes User Agent Accessibility Guidelines ([\[WAI-USERAGENT\]](#)) and Authoring Tool Accessibility Guidelines ([\[WAI-AUTOOLS\]](#)).

Web Site: A related collection of World Wide Web (WWW) files that includes a beginning file called a home page.

Web Application: A software program that uses HTTP for its core communication protocol and delivers Web-based information to the user in the HTML language. Also called a Web-based application.

W3C: The World Wide Web Consortium <http://www.w3.org> is a forum for information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding. W3C develops interoperable technologies (specifications, guidelines, software, and tools) to lead the Web to its full potential.

WATG: To assist developers in using the template and meeting accessibility This Standard, the Web Accessibility and Training Guide (WATG) was developed. The WATG is an online resource that provides guidance on achieving Section 508 and WCAG Level A or better accessibility. The WATG

uses current research in usable design and human engineering trends to assist Webmasters in ensuring that their Web site is the best it can be.

<http://www.vadsa.org/watg>